

UNCLASSIFIED

SK43

**Boudreau, Paul E**

**To:** Burger, David  
**Subject:** RE: John Bellinger's conference calls with European journalists, 12/5/05 (re reports of renditions, secret flights)

RELEASED IN FULL

**From:** Orlansky, Michael D  
**Sent:** Monday, December 05, 2005 8:25 PM  
**To:** Milovanovic, Gillian A; Wohlers, Paul; Hubler, Stephen A  
**Subject:** FW: John Bellinger's conference calls with European journalists, 12/5/05 (re reports of renditions, secret flights)

FYI, these points provided by Brooks Robinson (PAO Geneva) through EUR/PPD, about a briefing to journalists by John Bellinger of L -- on deep background -- may be of interest regarding the continuing reports of renditions, secret flights and prisons in Europe.  
Mike

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Davidson, Terry R  
**Sent:** Monday, December 05, 2005 7:44 PM  
**To:** EUR-PPD-DL; EUR-PPD-IO-DL; EUR-PPD-PAO-DL  
**Cc:** EUR-FO; EUR-Directors  
**Subject:** FW: John Bellinger's conference calls with European journalists, 12/5/05

Wanted to forward along to IOs and PAOs this excellent readout from Brooks Robinson of the "deep background" briefing by legal advisor John Bellinger:

His key points (summarized in my words, again, not for attribution):

- 1) The US has fully **respected** European sovereignty in counter-terrorism activities.
- 2) Wrong to speak of torture flights -- we do not send people off to be tortured. We do not torture nor turn over detainees to those who do. Despite media reports to the contrary, no plane has been through European airports carrying people off to be tortured.
- 3) Whether you call it rendition or transfer, this is not a new concept. Cited example of Carlos the Jackal rendition by the French as precedent, supported by European Commission of Human Rights.
- 4) Secretary's statement is not going on the offense, but encouraging a dialogue and responding to concerns.
- 5) Noting that some of the European shock about renditions/flights is disingenuous, he recalled Captain Louis Renault's line from *Casablanca*: *I am shocked, shocked to find that gambling is going on in here!*" Reporters captured the parallel.

For the time being, the Secretary's words should be those we point to... Terry

**Terry Davidson**  
Division Chief, Press and Outreach  
Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs  
Room 4515, HST  
Department of State  
202-647-6291

**From:** Robinson, Brooks A(Geneva)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER  
DATE/CASE ID: 28 JAN 2009 200706444

UNCLASSIFIED

# UNCLASSIFIED

**Sent:** Monday, December 05, 2005 10:28 AM  
**To:** Graffy, Colleen P; Erel, Joseph A (PACE)(Washington); Homer, Jamie L (PACE)(PA/FO); Davidson, Terry R  
**Cc:** Barbaro, Anne V; Gianfranceschi, Robert E; Wood, Robert A; Platt, Lynne G; Poisson, Beth L(London); Roberts, Rick L(London); Wilbur, Richard M; Denig, Paul N; Kovar, Jeffrey D; Cassel, Lynn L; Bass, John R (OPS)  
**Subject:** John Bellinger's conference calls with European journalists, 12/5/05

John Bellinger just did a series of three strong deep-background briefings on the Secretary's statement this morning, for nine European/international journalists. His comments provided valuable context for the Secretary's remarks; he came across as open and responsive; the effort was clearly much appreciated. Two issues for PA/EUR follow-up are highlighted below.

Mr. Bellinger talked with nine European journalists, via conference call from Geneva. He did 20 minutes each with:

- Three Germans (Michael Backfisch of Handelsblatt, Clemens Wergin of Tagesspiegel, Nikolaus Busse of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung);
- Three British (Dan Dombey of FT, Bronwyn Maddox of Times of London, and Diana Geddes of the Economist); and
- Three French/international (Corine Lesnes of Le Monde, Philippe Gelie of Le Figaro, and Brian Knowlton of IHT).

Bellinger started each session with opening remarks, briefly summarized:

- USG is being as forthcoming as possible; we take this very seriously.
- We can't get into specifics, but the sense that there have been hundreds of flights and therefore hundreds of renditions is way overblown.
- USG is not "on the offensive," but rather responding as comprehensively as possible.
- He then reviewed several of the Secretary's points: renditions are neither new nor done only by the US; we fully respect sovereignty; we don't do renditions with expectation of torture, nor have any of our planes passed via Europe to send someone to torture.

Questions focussed heavily on trying to pin him down on what "respect for sovereignty" means; what European governments actually knew/approved; what US-European intelligence cooperation looks like; why we can't just say we have no secret sites if in fact we don't; how we define torture and how we guarantee that people rendered are not tortured; and why we do renditions.

Mr. Bellinger strongly reinforced the Secretary's message, emphasizing that while he can't go into specifics and can neither confirm nor deny intelligence activities, that US-European cooperation is important for the protection of ALL our citizens. He emphasized as well, quoting the Secretary's remarks, that renditions involve "a very small number of extremely dangerous detainees," and are carried out with respect for other nations' sovereignty.

**Two questions arose that merit follow-up; I pass them along for your consideration:**

- **How exactly will the Secretary's response to the Straw letter be conveyed, and will it be made public? (e.g., will it be a copy of her remarks this morning under a cover letter?)**
- **Can we provide at least some specifics of how US-European intelligence cooperation has saved European lives? This would help our case.**

Thank-yous:

Colleagues in Bonn, London, USEU, Paris, and Washington did a fantastic job rounding up reporters from key media outlets on just a few hours' notice, and Ops Center staff did an equally great job of coordinating the call-ins, again on short notice (and on the morning of the Secretary's travel).

\*\*\*\*\*

Brooks Anne Robinson  
Counselor for Public Affairs  
US Mission, Geneva  
tel: 41-22-749-4360  
[www.usmission.ch](http://www.usmission.ch)

UNCLASSIFIED